

### **REMARKS**

This Preliminary Amendment is filed in order to facilitate processing in the above-identified application. In particular, claims 15 has been amended for stylistic reasons. The amendment is unrelated to a statutory requirement for patentability and does not narrow the literal scope of the claim.

Thus it now appears that the application is in condition for reconsideration and allowance. Reconsideration and allowance at an early date are respectfully requested.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact, by telephone, the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed within the currently set shortened statutory period, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such extension of time may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

In the event that any additional fees are due with this paper, please charge  
our Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

Date: January 10, 2005

By:

  
Ellen Marcie Emas

Registration No. 32,131

P.O. Box 1404  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404  
(703) 836-6620